

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

A new drawing labeled Figure 8 schematically depicting an extrusion die is submitted herewith.

REMARKS

The application has been amended to place it in condition for allowance at the time of the next Official Action.

Information disclosure statement

The position set forth in the Official Action is that the IDS submitted on November 5, 2009 does not include a concise explanation of the relevance.

However, as pointed out in the Amendment of November 5, 2009, the relevance of these references is based on these references being cited in co-pending Application No. 10/583,941 filed by the present inventor and which is also directed to a block for filtering particles contained in exhaust gases of an internal combustion engine. Based on the two applications including similar claimed subject matter, the relevance of the references cited in the '941 application appears to have similar relevance to the present application. A copy of the international search report that cited these references is attached for the Examiner's reference.

Accordingly, consideration of these references is respectfully requested.

Drawing objection

A new drawing schematically depicting an extrusion die is submitted herewith. Since the drawing is a schematic representation and since an extrusion die was originally disclosed, it is believed not to introduce new matter.

As to the structure of the extrusion die, none is recited. Rather, the recited "structure provided with channels" is the structure that is formed by the die and is used to fabricate the filter block (see page 4, lines 18-20).

As to the recitation in claim 21 "wherein said first portion comprises an external face in contact with the exterior of said block", this is changed to "wherein said first portion comprises an external face defining an exterior of said block" consistent with the disclosure on page 6, lines 20-24 and as seen in Figure 3, for example.

Please note that the "exterior" of the block means the environment around the block. In other words, the external face of the block is the face which is indeed in contact with this environment. Put it differently, the external face is the face which is exposed to the environment of the block.

See also the passages page 4, lines 3 and 4 and page 8, lines 9 and 10 which mean that the reinforcing partition "defines" the external face of the block.

The "external face" designates the surface which is exposed to the environment of the block. It may be defined by a portion of the side wall of at least one of the peripheral channels, as in claim 21.

As to the recited "ceramic material" of claim 29, this is a known material (see page 1, lines 16-17) that is an intermediate product (undergoes extrusion) to form the claimed filter block. As such, the specifics of this material are not necessary for a complete understanding of the invention and therefore, it appears that a ceramic material need not be shown.

In view of the above, it is believed that each of the drawing objections is addressed and reconsideration and withdrawal of the same are respectfully requested.

Specification Objection

As set forth above, claim 21 is amended and recites "wherein said first portion comprises an external face defining an exterior of said block" consistent with the disclosure on page 6, lines 20-24. Such amendment is believed to obviate the specification objection in item 10. of the Official Action.

Similarly, as set forth above, the structure of the die is not recited. Rather, the recited "structure provided with channels" is the structure that is formed by the die and is used to fabricate the filter block (see page 4, lines 18-20). Thus, the specification objection in item 11. of the Official Action is believed to be addressed.

As to item 12., the recited "ceramic material" of claim 29, is disclosed at least one page 1, lines 16-17, including examples of such a material.

Accordingly, it is believed that each of the specification objections is addressed and reconsideration and withdrawal of the same are respectfully requested.

Claims

Claims 18, 20-27, 29, 30, 34-36 and 38 were previously pending in the application. Claim 26 is canceled and new claims 39-41 are added. Therefore, claims 18, 20-25, 27, 29, 30, 34-36 and 38-41 are presented for consideration.

Applicants note with appreciation the indication that claims 21, 26, 29, 30 and 34 are allowable.

In reliance thereon, independent 18 is amended to include the subject matter of claim 26. In addition, each of claims 29, 30 and 34 is rewritten in independent form.

Claim objection

Claim 18 is amended in a manner that is believed to address the claim objection. That is, claim 18 is amended to clarify the relationship between a first portion and a second portion. Please note that the recitation of "second portion" after "remaining portions of the side wall" is the first time that "second portion" is used and thus the article "a" is believed to be appropriate.

Amending claims 20, 22 and 23 to depend from claim 18 and canceling claim 26 is believed to address the claim objection as to these claims. Accordingly, withdrawal of the claim objections is respectfully requested.

35 USC 112, first paragraph rejection

Amending claim 21 to recite "wherein said first portion comprises an external face defining an exterior of said block" consistent with the disclosure on page 6, lines 20-24 is believed to obviate 35 USC 112, first paragraph rejection as to this claim.

As to claim 26, the specification fully supports this claim. The pertinent portion of claim 26 is reproduced below and recites "wherein said reinforcement is substantially constant for all the reinforced channels of a group in any transverse plane of section and/or in any longitudinal plane".

Thus, while the corners might be thicker than the non-corner areas, nevertheless, the claim does not recite that the thickness is substantially constant for all the reinforced channels, but qualifies that the substantially constant aspect is for all the reinforced channels of a group in any transverse plane of section and/or in any longitudinal plane. That is, claim 26 requires that the reinforcement does not vary from section to section, but is substantially constant in any transverse plane of section and/or in any longitudinal plane.

Accordingly, when the entire portion of the claim is read in context including the corresponding supporting portions in the specification (see page 4, lines 5-13), one of ordinary skill in the art would be able to make or use the invention without undue experimentation. Therefore, the test of enablement

is believed to be met and withdrawal of the rejection as to claim 26 is respectfully requested.

As to claim 29, as set forth above, the structure of the die is not recited. Rather, the recited "structure provided with channels" is the structure that is formed by the die and is used to fabricate the filter block (see page 4, lines 18-20). The only other portion of claim 29 recites that "said structure comprising said reinforcement." Thus, the extruded structure that forms the filter block includes the reinforcement. That is, when the filter block is extruded, it includes the reinforcement. Contrast this with page 1, lines 16-26, wherein previous extruded structures do not include a reinforcement.

Thus, the specification describes the claimed subject matter in such a way so as to enable one of ordinary skill in the art to make or use the invention without undue experimentation. Therefore, the test of enablement is believed to be met and withdrawal of the rejection as to claim 29 is respectfully requested.

As to claims 30 and 34, as set forth above, the structure of the die is not recited. Rather, the recited "structure provided with channels" is the structure that is formed by the die and is used to fabricate the filter block. Moreover, as set forth above, at least page 4, lines 18-20 disclose this feature. See also original claim 17 and page 5, lines 2-3. Since Applicants are not claiming more than originally

disclosed, the written description requirement as to claims 30 and 34 is believed to be satisfied.

Additionally as to claims 30 and 34, as set forth above, the recited "ceramic material suitable for the fabrication of a filter block" is disclosed at least on page 1, lines 16-17, including examples of such a material. See also page 4, lines 18-21. Since Applicants are not claiming more than originally disclosed, the written description requirement as to claims 30 and 34 is believed to be satisfied.

As to claim 36, page 6, lines 20-24 disclose:

"The reinforcing partition 30 is formed by all the external portions of the side walls of the peripheral channels. Its thickness is constant and equal to "E". The reinforcing partition 30 extends along the whole length "L" of the block 11, from the upstream face 12 to the downstream face 13, forming the external surface 16 of the block 11." Emphasis added.

Since claim 18, from which claim 36 depends, recites a continuous partition formed by a plurality of adjacent blocks, one of ordinary skill in the art would recognize that "the assembled blocks have said reinforcement along their whole external surface" as recited in claim 36, was originally disclosed such that the written description requirement as to claim 36 is believed to be satisfied.

As to claim 38, the recited features of this claim are disclosed at least on page 6, lines 31-34. Since Applicants are not claiming more than originally disclosed, the written

description requirement as to claim 38 is believed to be satisfied.

35 USC 112, second paragraph

Amending claims 20, 22 and 23 to depend from claim 18, which recites "a group" and removing the term "preferably" from claim 23" is believed to address the 35 USC 112, second paragraph rejection as to these claims (items 23 and 24). Accordingly, withdrawal of the same is respectfully requested.

As to claim 27, "R" is removed to clarify that the ratio refers back to the ratio of claim 18, from which claim 27 depends. In addition, the term "preferably is substantially equal to 2" is removed and presented in a new dependent claim. Accordingly, withdrawal of the item 25 and 26 rejections is respectfully requested.

As to item 27., claim 18 is amended in a manner that is believed to address 35 USC 112, second paragraph rejection.

In addition, in order to clarify the "one or more" and "plurality" aspect noted in the Official Action, Applicants note that the first term "at least one" refers to a channel of a block, while the second term "plurality" refers to the filter body that is comprised of a plurality of filter blocks.

By way of example, Figure 4 shows two channels 14p and 14p" of block 11' having reinforcement 30, while Figure 7 shows a plurality of blocks 11₁-11₁₆ assembled together to form a filter body. Thus, one or more channels of a **block** has a reinforcement,

and when a plurality of blocks are assembled together, adjacent blocks that have the reinforced channel are arranged to form a continuous reinforcing partition of the filter body.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the item 27 rejection is respectfully requested.

Amending claim 35 to change "said block" to "at least one of said blocks" is believed to address the 35 USC 112, second paragraph rejection in items 28. Accordingly, withdrawal of the same is respectfully requested.

35 USC 103 rejection

Amending the claims as above to incorporate the allowable subject matter is believed to obviate the rejection of claims 18, 20, 22-55, 27, 35, 36 and 38 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over OHNO et al. WO 01/23069 in view of MATSUBARA et al. US 6,060,148.

New claims 39-41 are added. Support for claim 39 can be found in previous claim 27. Support for claim 40 can be found at least one page 7, lines 16 to 18 and support for claim 40 can be found at least one page 9, lines 15-16.

Charge the fee of \$220 for the one independent claim added herewith, to our credit card.

Since the claims remaining in the application are directed to subject matter indicated as allowable, or depend from an allowable claim, and since the formal matters are believed to be addressed, it is believed that the present application has

been placed in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Should there be any matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any

overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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APPENDIX:

The appendix includes the following items:

- a new drawing labeled FIG. 8
- a copy of the International Search Report that was cited against co-pending application no. 10/583,941